

IAMCR Update on Activities – 25 January 2005 from Robin Mansell, President IAMCR

Good wishes to all for the new year.

The following provides a glimpse of where I have got to with respect to a number of ongoing issues (listed in no particular order) and is provided on my sole responsibility. It only covers that which I have been directly involved in and is not 'required' reading – only do so to the extent you are interested!

Publicity for IAMCR Research:

- I have prepared a draft '**IAMCR Media and Communication Research Review 2005**' (attached) which collates and integrates information from many different sources. I did this initially to inform myself, but I believe that a revised version might be released since it gives anyone interested insight into what our membership's research covers (at least to some extent). I hope members will find it useful. If errors or mistakes are found, I hope you will correct them and provide feedback to me and assume that my intentions are good, even if you are not happy with the text (this will not be translated due to cost reasons as it is lengthy). **Feedback by end of February 05 please.** I will publish it under my name as editor/collator and provide text that absolves you of responsibility. I am not sure whether this is something to do each year, so I might take the '2005' off it.
- I have also prepared a draft text for a new **IAMCR brochure** (attached). If agreed we will publish it on the website. Once a budget for this year is agreed, I will investigate the costs of publishing some hard copies (this will be translated when the text is finalised). **Feedback by end of February 05 please**
- I have similarly prepared a new text as **introduction to the IAMCR website** which comes from me as President (attached). I would like to post this at the website because it seems to me to be a somewhat less formal way to introduce ourselves – as compared to the formality of the statutes, etc., which will remain at the site (this will be translated when the text is finalised). **Feedback by end of February 05 please**

Conferences:

- Plans are moving ahead for the 2005 conference in Taipei. One plenary session will be devoted to addressing aspects of the Tsunami disaster in December. Professor Lucie Cheng and her colleagues on the Local Organising Committee are in touch with Ole about the details of the conference. The local organising committee is fund raising to offer travel grants to some participants and has agreed to make criteria for awards available to the Executive Board. I have contacted UNESCO, so far without response, re possible funding.

- Two bids have been received to host the 2006 conference (Egypt and US). The Executive Board raised some questions and requested clarifications and responses are due at the end of January. We hope to put a recommendation to the International Council shortly after that.
- There have been some complaints by individuals who attended the 2004 Porto Alegre conference that they were charged twice (on their credit cards). In one case, an individual has received a refund. In one other, that I am aware of we are still waiting for a response from the local organisers. I have been led to believe that there are other cases which Ole has made inquiries about. We are hoping that there will be a response in due course from the local organisers and I apologise to anyone who is in this position and who is still waiting for a resolution.
- We have also received some complaints from members that links to abstracts or papers hosted by Porto Alegre 2004 conference website are broken or wrong in various cases. This is a matter that simply cannot be fixed by the Executive Board as control of the website is entirely a matter for the local conference organisers.

Financial Matters:

- A draft budget (04-05) has been prepared and circulated to the Executive Board. It contains some provisions for 'new initiatives' that may need discussion. Ole Prehn has suggested that we not seek International Council discussion/approval at the same time as we will be having a discussion about the hosting of the 2006 IAMCR conference because of the flurry of emails that this would create. I can however assure you that other than expenditure to support the Treasurer's Office in Brazil, there have been no unexpected expenditures.
- The draft budget prepared last year will need to be revised now in the light of Annie Mear's finalisation of last year's accounts. The Budget Committee will attend to this soon. The Executive Board has agreed to change the financial year to a calendar year basis on Annie Mear's advice and in the interest of simplification. Annie has prepared final accounts for the Executive Board. She has closed the Royal Bank of Canada account in Montreal and funds have been transferred to a new HSBC IAMCR bank account.
- As a result of difficulties experienced in providing César Bolaño with the legal documentation needed by authorities in Brazil to prove that he is the Treasurer of IAMCR, the Executive Board decided to open the IAMCR US dollars Bank Account in London with HSBC. I managed to get IAMCR documents required by César legally notarized in the UK last week and documents have been sent to him by courier. By law in the UK we had to open a pound sterling account as well, so that may be used as appropriate.
- Various start up costs for the new HSBC account have been covered by LSE. This has taken an extraordinary amount of time for a variety of reasons and I thank Annie for her patience and good will and César and his assistant Marcos

for their patience as well. As of today, César does *not* have full online access to the account (the necessary smart card is currently stuck with the DHL courier in Brazil). When he receives this, he will have full transactional capability.

Membership and Renewals

- The response to my letters in 2004 to those who have been members in the past but who – based on the record of the IAMCR database – had lapsed inviting them to rejoin has been rewarding. Several institutional members have indicated their intention to rejoin or have done so already. Various regular members have rejoined as well. Several more have written to me to explain why they do not wish to rejoin. Still other new members are indicating they wish to join including some students. I followed up on a visit by Frank Morgan to China by writing to some 20 individuals whom he had contacted. Many responded very positively to the idea of joining IAMCR either individually or as institutional members, though only one individual has done so thus far. I will continue to pursue this.
- With the agreement of the Executive Board I have arranged an online credit card payment facility with HSBC. This could go ‘live’ now, but we have encountered major difficulties in providing the website which is required by the bank for this to happen. All I can say at this stage is that I am working on it together with Ole and his assistants and we are treating this as an **urgent matter**. I have received many emails from members requesting this facility for membership renewal. After evaluating various online payment systems (cost-wise, etc.), the Executive Board decided it was sensible to do this. There are some costs (of transactions and maintenance which are charged by the bank), but we believe them to be manageable.
- At present, we are putting a procedure in place for the membership renewal process for 2005. So far, members have not been invited to pay their dues for this year. My hope is that once the credit card payment arrangements are in place, we can call for renewals quickly. I consider this to be the **most urgent of matters** and apologise for the fact that it is taking so long to sort out. In a Kafkaesque-like way, no one is at fault and on this issue I hope that good news will follow soon.
- Some members have been sending cheques to my LSE office. The Executive Board decided to use my postal address because we have experienced major difficulties with the international postal system. Mail sent by regular post to the Treasurer’s office in Brazil does not arrive on a timely basis and we cannot run the risk of losing cheque payments by members. My office is passing on all information received to the Treasurer’s office.
- The Directory of IAMCR members has been updated thanks to the efforts of Peter Lewis and my assistant, Kathy Moir. We will ‘publish’ it initially as a *beta* version because I want everyone to provide corrections where they find errors. Nearly all members contacted by Peter wished their details including email addresses to be included but we will be altering the email addresses so

that they are not so easily stolen by spammers, etc. The draft version should be in circulation in February 05.

IAMCR Website

- You will be aware that the IAMCR website has been updated and changed with the aim of providing more interactive capabilities. This went 'live' shortly before Christmas and we must thank Ole and his colleagues for their efforts. The changes in the website create the need for some effort by all IAMCR members. Existing and new members must sign onto the web site. This applies to **all members**. Once you sign on, I am told that you will receive confirmation from the Treasurer's Office that you are a paid up member and then be able to access information about other members, etc. I think, however, that there are going to be some 'teething problems'.
- I signed myself and LSE as an institutional member onto the new website and have after several weeks received a form inviting me to pay (I can do that because I happen to know the bank account but it isn't on the form yet, so that will need to be revised). But if I wanted to pay by credit card – I couldn't because there is no online facility and we have yet to work out who would process the card information if I put it on the form. I have the form, but the treasurer does not. Even if he did, it is not yet clear what procedure he would use to deal with HSBC. If a member were to pay that information has to go to Brazil before that member will be authorised to use the website. This procedure (whatever it is) has to be streamlined and I hope we can put something in place that works soon. **Feedback** to me on members' experience of the redesigned website is essential and welcome at any time. Since I have so far failed to get myself signed on, I cannot check whether you are using this site. Organised in this way, there are going to be 'network effects'. Until a critical mass of members 'joins' this site, it will not work to the advantage of anyone. **Please try it out at www.iamcr.net**
- In the Autumn 04 I raised with members the issue of whether we want the website to host full conference papers (currently it is designed to host abstracts only). I received about 10 responses divided quite evenly between those who do not think full papers should be available and those who do (or think it should be up to paper authors). Various reasons were given for not posting full papers at our website including views about copyright, plagiarism, and publication. Although I would opt for full paper publication (with a right to withhold), I am told that redesign of the website to do this would incur considerable cost and so I am not presently going to push for it. I am more concerned that we get members signed onto the database, assuming they will do so.
- IAMCR ListServ – After his long service as manager of our list, Andrew Calabrese requested during the July 04 International Council meeting that he stand down. Ole Prehn has arranged to take on this role and to provide the technical assistance to implement it and information will be available soon

about the new address. Andrew will maintain the current listserv until the new one is operational. Thanks to Andrew for all his work over the years on this.

Other News and International Relations

- A proposal will be made to the Executive Board and the International Council (for later ratification by the General Assembly if agreed) for a new Prize in memory of Professor Dallas Smythe to be awarded for an outstanding paper at biennial conferences. Details will be circulated in due course and funding for the prize has been secured to cover a fairly substantial time period from an anonymous source (First award envisaged for the 2006 conference). This will compliment the existing Prize in memory of Professor Herbert Schiller and is similarly for younger scholars.
- *WSIS Taskforce and WSIS* - As current IAMCR President, I am the 'focal point' for registering members who wish to attend WSIS-related meetings including the PreCom2 in February 05. An email has been circulated inviting members to contact me if they wish to attend. There have been ongoing discussions by members of the Taskforce, etc. Bart Cammaerts, working with the Co-Chairs of the Taskforce, has prepared and is maintaining webpages, see our website.
- I initiated contact with UNESCO towards the end of last year so that I could begin to build on that relationship. Kwame Boafo asked that I delay a visit to Paris until this year due to his work commitments. I emailed last week to request some dates for a visit. As far as I know, UNESCO has completed its evaluation of the UNESCO-IAMCR relationship (thanks to those of you who completed the their survey) which started some time ago and was mainly managed by Frank Morgan (for which also thanks). I have not had sight of it and intend to inquire about it and the outcome soon.
- I have been invited to join the International Advisory Committee of AMIC (Asia Media Information and Communication Centre) which is an Associate Member of IAMCR (apologies for immodesty in reporting this, but think you should be aware of these types of links in case they can be helpful to you). I plan to attend their conference, 18-21 July, in Beijing this year.
- I initiated discussion with the International Federation of Communication Associations (IFCA) initially via Professor David Mitchell (Calgary, Canada) and then with Professor Kaus Krippendorff (Annenberg Philadelphia) and will bring a proposal that IFCA joins IAMCR as an Associate Member which they have said they would welcome as they would us joining them (I know there is some history here. David Mitchell is initiating work to collate information about teaching programmes world wide in our field which he has agreed to share with us when available. It has been suggested to me that IAMCR might begin the process of collecting such information. If I initiate this, I will ensure that it does not duplicate what David Mitchell may be doing and will be following up with him.

Best wishes, Robin

New IAMCR BANK DETAILS FOR INFORMATION

(NOTE THE OLD ROYAL BANK ACCOUNTS ARE CLOSED NOW)

ALL this information must be provided if you intend to make a direct bank transfer –

Name of Bank: HSBC

Account Holder's Name: IAMCR

Bank Account No.: 59092763

Branch Number (Sort Code): 400515

Bank Address: 194 Strand, London, WC2R 1DX

City: London

Country: United Kingdom

Tel. Number of Branch: 08457 404 404 (UK only)

Fax Number of Branch: +44 (0) 7599 3914

Contact Person at Bank: Timothy Sharpen (email timothysharpen@hsbc.com); direct tel. +44 20 7599 3902

Swift Number or ABA Number (IBAN number): USD account
GB92MIDL40051559092763.